

Make Us One

A Study Guide for the Bilateral Dialogue between the Episcopal Church in the USA and The United Methodist Church

*Let the grace of this Holy Communion
make us one body, one spirit in Christ...*
(Episcopal Liturgy for Holy Communion,
Eucharistic Prayer “C”)

Make us one in Christ...
(United Methodist Liturgy for Holy Communion)

*Didst thou not make us one
that we might one remain?*
(Charles Wesley)

Easter 2006

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INTRODUCTION

In Advent 1999 a group of Methodists and Anglicans, mostly in the United States, agreed to pray together for Anglican-Methodist unity through the liturgical year that began in Advent 1999. Their prayers reflect the deep longing of many Anglicans and Methodists that our churches somehow find a way to stronger, more visible unity in Christ. Their prayers could be summarized in the petition that serves as the title of this study guide: “Make us one.”

It is with great pleasure that the Office of Ecumenical and Interfaith Relations of the Episcopal Church and the General Commission on Christian Unity and InterReligious Concerns of The United Methodist Church present this study guide to assist our two churches in receiving the work of the Episcopal-United Methodist Bilateral Dialogue.

The Episcopal-United Methodist dialogue has set full communion as the goal for our two churches. In this case, full communion is understood as a relationship between two distinct churches or communions in which each maintains its own autonomy while recognizing the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and believing the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith. In such a relationship, communicant members of each church would be able freely to communicate at the altar of the other, and ordained ministers may officiate sacramentally in either church. Specifically, in our context, we understand this to include transferability of members; mutual recognition and interchangeability of ministries; freedom to use each other's liturgies; freedom to participate in each other's ordinations and installations of clergy, including bishops; and structures for consultation to express, strengthen, and enable our common life, witness, and service, to the glory of God and the salvation of the world.

Methodists and Episcopalians have much in common from our roots in the Church of England and in how our traditions went through a process of adaptation to the American colonies. This is particularly the case in the post-Revolutionary period, which was an extraordinarily formative period for both of our traditions. Despite many commonalties, Methodists and Episcopalians have rarely been in one-on-one, bilateral dialogue with one another in the United States. Initial attempts in the 1930s were postponed from the Methodist side to focus on the reunion of the Methodist Episcopal Church's Northern and Southern branches, which was accomplished in 1939. Following the Second World War, and building on Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher's call in his famous Cambridge Sermon for renewed dialogue between Anglicans and other churches, the Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church engaged in dialogue from 1948-1961. These conversations, however, were ended in favor of both churches' participation in the multi-church Consultation on Church Union. In 1968 the Methodist Church merged with the Evangelical United Brethren Church to form the

United Methodist Church. From 1964-2002, the Methodist and, later, The United Methodist Church, dialogued with the Episcopal Church within the context of the Consultation on Church Union.

Meanwhile, Anglicans and Methodists in Great Britain and Ireland engaged in several different rounds of bilateral dialogue for the last fifty years. An initial proposal for reunion in England was approved the Methodist Conference in 1972 but failed to achieve the necessary 75% threshold in the General Synod of the Church of England. In 1982, a Covenanting for Unity proposal which included Methodist, Moravians and the Reformed churches in Great Britain again failed to receive the required 75% in General Synod. In 1994, the Methodist Church approached the Church of England to engage in preliminary talks. These talks eventually lead to both churches embarking on formal conversations in 1996, setting as their goal the visible unity of the church. These conversations have continued, and issued the seminal Anglican-Methodist Covenant in 2001. In 2002, this Covenant was signed by the British Methodist Church and the Church of England, committing the churches to a ten-year process of covenant relationship marked by increasing cooperation in mission, witness, and education.

Similar advance have been made on the international level. Responding to an initiative from the 1988 Lambeth Conference, the Anglican Communion and the World Methodist Council engaged in a communion-wide dialogue from 1993-1996. It issued its final report, *Sharing the Apostolic Communion*, which detailed the substantial theological convergence reached between Anglicans and Methodists. On the basis of such convergence, the 1998 Lambeth Conference encouraged local provinces of the Communion to engage in dialogues with Methodist Churches (Resolution IV.17, 1998 Lambeth Conference).

Building on the momentum from the International dialogue and the Anglican-Methodist Conversations in England, and from an important and very productive local Episcopal-United Methodist dialogue in North Carolina, The United Methodist Church, authorized by its 2000 General Conference, and the Episcopal Church, authorized by the 2000 General Convention, met for its first bilateral dialogue in 2002. The period from 2002-2006 marked the initial stage of the dialogue, and has focused on two goals. The first was an examination of one another's polities, ecclesiologies, and shared history. Papers by Dr. R. Bruce Mullin, the Rev. Dr. Ephraim Radner, and the Rev. Dr. Russell Richey formally addressed these issues, supplemented by presentations provided by the Rev. Betty Gamble and Dr. Thomas Ferguson. The dialogue also sought to identify convergence on matters of core doctrine for both churches. Meetings in Minneapolis and New York City addressed these questions. The Minneapolis dialogue meeting in August of 2003 featured papers by Dr. Marion Grau, the Very Rev. Bill Petersen, and the Rev. Dr. Ted Campbell, which attempted to describe the doctrinal ethos and standards of Anglicans and Methodists. The Dallas meeting of January 2004 focused on this question, with papers pre-

sented by the Rev. Canon J. Robert Wright and Bishop William Oden on the historic episcopate, and by the Very Rev. Titus Presler and Dr. Billy Abraham on mission. The September 2004 dialogue meeting in New York City focused more specifically on two very important United Methodist theological statements, *By Water and the Spirit*, about Baptism, and *This Holy Mystery*, about the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion. The Rev. Dr. Gayle Fenton, who served on the study and drafting committees for these documents, presented them from The United Methodist Church and the Rev. Dr. Ruth Meyers and the Rt. Rev. Neil Alexander provided responses from the Episcopal Church.

While focusing on matters of core doctrine, the two churches also began to discuss the one issue upon which convergence was unlikely to be reached during the initial phase of dialogue: that of the ordained ministry, in particular the historic episcopate. The two churches chose to begin discussion on the ordained ministry by looking at how both churches have maintained faithfulness to the apostolic faith through mission and through the episcopate.

The two churches have also sought practical ways to find areas of cooperation in witness and mission. Fifteen bishops from each church met in Chicago, Illinois, in 2005 to discuss how our two churches face similar challenges. It is hoped that this initial consultation may lead to future joint meeting of the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church and the Council of Bishops of The United Methodist Church. The January 2006 meeting of the dialogue met with members of the local North Carolina United Methodist-Episcopal dialogue (which has been meeting since 1992) to share the learnings of that productive dialogue. Further, the September 2006 meeting has invited leadership and members from a joint Methodist-Episcopal congregation to attend in order to see how joint mission can happen on a local level.

After four years of dialogue, and with nearly forty years of discussion in the Consultation on Church Union, The United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church feel that they can endorse without hesitation that both churches have maintained the apostolic faith and are members of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. On the basis of this substantial theological agreement, the Episcopal Church is submitting a resolution authorizing Interim Eucharistic Sharing with The United Methodist Church to its 2006 General Convention. The United Methodist Council of Bishops, which has the authority to authorize Eucharistic sharing, has already passed a similar resolution. With the inauguration of Interim Eucharistic Sharing, it is hoped that this will begin to bring parishes together in joint worship, mission, witness, and study. In Interim Eucharistic Sharing, the two churches recognize one another as members of the only, holy, Catholic, and apostolic church, authorize joint celebrations of the Eucharist as a way to live into a deeper relationship for the sake of mission and witness.

Having reached agreement in matters of essential doctrine, the second round of dialogue between The United Methodist Church and the Episco-

pal Church, commencing in 2006, will focus on the remaining matter upon which the two churches have been unable to reach complete agreement: that of the historic episcopate, a fully interchangeable ordained ministry, and commonly agreed upon Eucharistic elements

We give thanks to God, whose Spirit has moved through our conversations and brought us thus far in our discussions. With thanksgiving we offer this study guide to the bishops, clergy, and deputies of the General Convention to assist in their deliberations at the 2006 General Convention. We also commend this study guide to the clergy and congregations of both our churches to deepen the relationship between our two churches and to foster better understanding for the sake of mission in local communities.

As we look forward to the continued work of this dialogue, we give thanks for the progress made and ask for God's guidance in addressing matters which need further discussion. As we do we are reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul and take heart: "Glory to God, whose power working in us can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory to God from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever" (Ephesians 3:20-21).

The Rt. Rev. Franklin Brookhart, Co-Chair
Bishop William B. Oden, Co-Chair

Members of the Dialogue

Episcopal Church

The Very Rev. David Bird, 2002-
The Rev. Lois Boxill, 2002-
The Rev. Theodora Brooks, 2002-
Ms. Jan Farmer, 2004-
The Rt. Rev. John Lipscomb, 2002-
2003
Deacon Sunny Lopez, 2004-
Dr. Bruce Mullin, 2002-
Dr. Patricia Page, 2002-
Dr. Ephraim Radner, 2002-2003
Dr. Thomas Ferguson, Staff Support

United Methodist Church

The Rev. Dr. Ted A. Campbell,
2006-
The Rev. Trey Hall, 2002-2006
The Rev. Erica R. Jenkins, 2002-
The Rev. Dr. Diedra Kriewald,
2002-
The Rev. Dr. Russell E. Richey,
2002-
The Rev. Jeannie Treviño-Teddlie,
2002-
The Rev. Elizabeth Gamble, Staff
Support
The Rev. Dr. Douglas Mills, Staff
Support

SECTION 1: A SHARED HERITAGE

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- 1.1 A Common Anglo-American Background
- 1.2 Crisis: One Church Becomes Two—Mission vs. Order
- 1.3 Development of Two Traditions
- 1.4 A New Milieu
- 1.5 Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1.1 A Common Anglo-American Background

The United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church are both descendants of the Church of England. The two churches share a common heritage, both having been birthed in the post-revolutionary period and shaped against the backdrop of the 1780s. This section examines those common backgrounds, looks at how the two traditions diverged, and notes a few convergences between Methodists and Episcopalians.

Some aspects of this common heritage are:

- A grounding in eighteenth century questions of religious **revival and identity**:

Methodism emerged in the colonies presenting itself, as it did in Britain, as a reform movement with Anglicanism and finding receptivity among peoples and with priests who shared Wesleyanism's aspiration for "heart" religion and holy living. Such conversionist, pietist or revivalistic practices (popularized in the colonial Great Awakening, in Continental Pietism and British Evangelicalism), affected only portions of colonial Anglicanism. As part of this transatlantic revival, the several preaching tours of the colonies by Anglican priest George Whitefield were particularly important. Nonetheless, some prominent Anglican clergy collaborated with the Methodist preachers, and some others experienced Methodism's organizing as a separate church as betrayal.. Both churches emerged after the Revolution in quest for independence from "foreign" authority and thrust into profound self-examination and seeking new terms of coherence. In a post-Revolutionary context both Anglicans and Methodists established identities shorn from their British contexts

- Appreciation for the **threefold ministry** of the church.

Both Anglicans and Methodists retained a threefold understand-

ing of the ministry of bishops, presbyters, and deacons. The names chosen for the new ecclesial expressions – the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church – reflect the centrality of the episcopate to the two churches’ self-understanding. Likewise there was a common emphasis on adapting the episcopacy to the missional setting of the new republic. This perspective offers parallels between William White’s *Case for the Episcopal Churches, Considered* (1782) and John Wesley’s ordination of superintendents for the American Methodist societies. Both argue for the restoration of apostolic models of episcopacy to suit the needs of the new American society. In addition both churches retained the threefold office of deacon, elder/presbyter, and bishop, though adapted in different ways.

- Sacramental, ecclesial understandings shaped by and expressed in the [Book of Common Prayer \(BCP\)](#).

Wesley himself had a high understanding of the sacraments, and advocated frequent reception of Holy Communion. Accordingly he adapted the BCP for the Methodists, titled *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*. Despite the restrictive title, it provided a full set of rituals—morning prayer, evening prayer, weekday litany, Sunday service, eucharist, two baptismal rites, orders for marriage, communion of the sick, and burial and ordination services for deacons, elders and superintendents. It also included a brief lectionary and twenty-four Articles of Religion, excerpted from Anglicanism's Thirty-Nine.

The founders of the Protestant Episcopal Church likewise expressed their strong intent to keep intact “the wise and liberal part of the system of the Church of England...” The Prayer Book which was adopted by the Protestant Episcopal Church was deemed acceptable by the English bishops, and, though formal adherence was not required, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion were added to the *Book of Common Prayer* in 1801.

- The norms of the [church-state](#).

Reflecting their common ancestry in a state-established church, Methodists and Episcopalians, while not legally established across the new American republic, nonetheless still perpetuated certain dynamics of their understandings of established churches. Both have seen their churches as not ends to themselves, but for service to the larger nation. Methodists quickly undertook missions that tracked settlement west and later founded schools, hospitals, and universities on a larger scale than Episcopalians, establishing an infrastructure as would suit an established church. Methodists also sought a greater role in shaping the

morals and religiosity of society. Episcopalians, on the other hand, while cool towards movements such as temperance and less active in establishing institutions, came to play a larger role in political, legal, financial, and judicial leadership.

- English traditions of **hymnody**, including that of Charles Wesley.

Both churches were shaped by the explosion in hymn-writing that was a byproduct of the Methodist renewal movement and the broader evangelical revival. The hymns of Charles Wesley in particular have had a formative role in shaping the popular piety in both churches.

- Continued orientation to and indebtedness to the **British** churches.

Even after formal separation from their English founders, the Methodist Churches and the Episcopal Church both continued to remain in contact with and to be shaped by relationships with the British Methodist Churches and the Church of England. Later, both churches would form more formal relationships which would lead to an understanding of Anglicanism and Methodism taking shape as global communions.

1.2 Crisis: One Church Becomes Two

One should not underestimate the severity of the crisis which both churches faced after the American Revolution. Anglicans and Methodists needed to address questions of identity: what did it mean to be a Methodist or an Anglican in a newly independent nation and apart from the formal structures of the Church of England or of John Wesley and the Methodist conference? Both churches were also suspect on the American landscape because of their ties with the loyalist cause. A significant number of Anglican clergy and lay people fled the colonies because of their loyalty to the Crown, as did most of the preachers whom Wesley had sent to the colonies. Wesley himself famously criticized the Revolution in a pamphlet and several Methodist preachers so aligned themselves with British forces as to tar the movement. The adaptation of Anglicanism and Methodism to the new republic is an astounding accomplishment. Anglicans and Methodists also had to forge their identities against the backdrop of a religious landscape dominated by churches influenced by Calvinist theology, particularly Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and, to some extent, Baptists.

In the crucial decade of the 1780s, decisions were made which set into motion important trajectories which would lead to increasing distance between Anglicans and Methodists. These trajectories involved important differences in the manner by which Anglicans and Methodists addressed church-state questions and issues of revival and identity.

The Episcopal Trajectory

Episcopalians, with leaders seasoned by Revolutionary and politics, trained as lawyers, and skilled in matters ecclesial and canonical organization, worried over the proper ordering of a church in a new nation and sought to determine the new identity and the church's relation to the civil order after being legally disestablished. This was done in successive General Conventions, each of which kept good records of its work and built on multiple drafts of new Constitution and Prayer Book, while at the same time remaining in close contact with the Church of England.

The Methodist Trajectory

Methodists adopted a Discipline for the new church in a hastily called "Christmas Conference" which met briefly, kept no record of its proceedings, and possessed only one trained leader—first Bishop Thomas Coke—producing the governing document by deleting from and adding to Wesley's "Large Minutes," itself an unusual constituting document. In addition, while the Protestant Episcopal Church was in regular consultation with the English bishops, the Methodist societies began to act in increasing isolation from Mr. Wesley and the British Methodists.

1.3 Development of Two Traditions

Thus a variety of expressions of colonial Anglicanism coalesced into two organizations in the post-Revolutionary period: The Protestant Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church. As a result of decisions made in these foundational years, each church began to develop its own "charisms" or distinctive gifts.

Methodist Peculiarities and Charisms

Many distinctive points of Methodist church life developed in the early American period. Some of these distinctive points may be summarized as follows.

- The Methodist Episcopal Church quickly adopted revivalist practices and pioneered the camp meeting on the new American frontier.
- It functioned with a missional understanding of the church and its purposes, the church as an evangelistic movement, down to its organization into conference and circuits.
- Wesleyan language, norms, structures, offices and doctrines were fit into an "episcopal" framework (although not all Methodist churches have adopted episcopacy).
- Methodism accommodated various democratic, reformist and populist impulses, including anti-slavery and openness to women's leadership roles.

- It emphasized preaching as central, leading to the celebration of Communion less frequently than weekly.
- Adopting a connectional, itinerant and missional rather than parish/diocesan understanding of the episcopacy, Methodism described its bishops as “itinerant, general superintendents”.
- It sustained Wesley’s effective use of discipline, practices of piety and small groups (class meeting) as well as camp meetings.
- Methodist churches developed considerable strength within African American communities in the early American period, with black constituents and clergy in the Methodist Episcopal Church and in separate African-American Methodist denominations which also emerged in this era (the African Methodist Episcopal and African Methodist Episcopal Zion Churches).¹

Episcopal Peculiarities and Charisms

During the nineteenth century the Episcopal Church developed along several broad fronts.

- The first was a revival of the catholic understanding of Anglicanism. But through it the sacramental nature of the church became highlighted, the sacerdotal nature of ministry was elevated, and new forms of spirituality became popular.
- A second was the development of a broader understanding of Anglicanism. By the second decade of the nineteenth century three distinct parties or wings developed: a high church party emphasizing the church’s catholic heritage, a low church party emphasizing the church’s evangelical heritage, and a broad church party emphasizing the church’s openness to modern intellectual and social trends. The presence of these three viewpoints forced the Episcopal church to see itself in inclusive terms. As a result the role of the liturgy became elevated as that which defined the church and held it together (this principle is often summarized in the expression *lex orandi, lex credendi*, “the rule of prayer is the rule of belief,” or, more simply, “prayer shapes belief”).

Peculiarities Summarized

A way to examine how these two churches concretized their peculiarities can be seen in the edifices they constructed in the nation’s capital. The two

¹Followers of Allen founded the *African Methodist Church*. In 1796, a similar experience in New York led to the organization of *The African Episcopal Church Zion*. After the civil war, the *Christian Methodist Episcopal Church* was formed from the African and African American members of the *Methodist Episcopal Church South*. These are all separate and thriving Methodist denominations.

churches created institutions that would symbolize their commitment to shaping a national ethos. Reflecting an emphasis on *lex orandi, lex credendi* and the place of worship in shaping identity, the Episcopalians built the National Cathedral. Reflecting an emphasis on education, the Methodists founded American University.

1.4 A New Milieu

Understanding the significance of the post-Revolutionary period is important in understanding the common heritage of both churches as well as how the two traditions separated. However, by the early twentieth century a number of factors began to emerge that called both churches to reassess some of its nineteenth century developments.

The first was the global expansion of Christianity as a result of the great missionary outreach of the nineteenth century. From a global perspective many of the divisions of Western Christendom looked much smaller. The modern Ecumenical Movement is usually dated from the Edinburgh Conference of 1910. At this conference, ostensibly called to discuss divisions in the global mission field, there was an understanding that churches needed to do more than cooperate, they needed to understand the differences between various expressions of Christianity. Episcopalians and Methodists were actively involved in the early stages of the ecumenical movement. The vision of Christian unity attracted many. Prominent Episcopalians (such as Charles Brent, missionary bishop to the Philippines) and Methodists (John R. Mott, a Methodist layman who had been active in YMCA work) became leaders in this enterprise.

Connected with this was a new scholarly movement that tried to get behind the division of the sixteenth century. Fresh examinations of thought and practice of the early church began to suggest that the ancient tradition was different from the later developments in theology, liturgy, and ecclesiology. This allowed for a new intellectual basis for consensus.

Finally, by the second half of the nineteenth century there was a perceived crisis in both Western Christendom and in America. As Europe began to move away from its historic Christian identity baptized people sensed they were in the same boat, and needed to stand together to hold certain values and beliefs. In America the old Protestant establishment centering upon the historic Anglo churches (which both Methodists and Episcopalians in their own ways had labored to defend) began to give way. This freed the churches to see themselves in a more ecclesial way.

Methodist Convergences with the New Milieu

- Methodists began a gradual balancing of revivalist and conversionist emphases, with accent on nurture and heightened formational expectations through establishment of national modes of communication (Methodist Magazine, the Christian Advocate) and by establishing numerous colleges and eventually seminaries, especially from the middle of the nineteenth century.

- Methodists supplemented conferences and connectional polity by creating central structures for programs—boards and agencies—eventually with professional leadership.
- Methodists actively participated in social reforms in the late nineteenth century and in the Social Gospel movement from the early twentieth century, cooperating in this movement with Episcopalians and others.
- Alert to liturgical developments in the Anglican/Episcopal church, Methodists began to study and reflect these developments in their own worship practices and publications, leading to the gradual reclamation of what had been Wesley's appreciation of the Christian year, the lectionary, sacramental sensibilities, and even liturgical vestments—seen in a succession of Methodist books of worship.
- There has been increased Methodist attention to the teaching and sacramental responsibilities of the clergy office, particularly as exercised and modeled by the bishops.
- Methodists also have been noted for active participation in, indeed, leadership of the ecumenical movement(s). A visual example of this movement can be summarized as the movement from the camp meeting to Chautauqua to Lake Junaluska. Such an image represents the importance of the mission field in motivating ecumenical spirit for Methodists.
- The AME and AME Zion churches had emerged among African-American Methodists in the early American period, and flourished in the period after the Civil War, with vigorous expansion into southern states. At this time also the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church was organized (1870) from African American constituency of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. It would eventually change its name (in the 1950s) to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church.

Episcopal Convergences with New Milieu

- New scholarship in history and liturgy began to weaken party divisions within the Episcopal Church. From this new perspective, catholicism and evangelicalism did not appear to be mutually exclusive. Likewise the new scholarship offered fresh ways of approaching some of the old issues such as episcopacy and apostolic succession.
- An ecumenical vision dictated that a divided church is not acceptable and the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral (formulated by Anglicans in the late nineteenth century) expressed Anglican understanding of criteria for future church unions.

- There was a fresh look at traditional theological and ecclesial divisions.

Episcopalians likewise have come to understand the importance of the global as well as domestic mission field in motivating ecumenical spirit.

1.5 Questions for Reflection and Discussion

John Wesley ordained Thomas Coke as “general superintendent” for the American colonies. Should Mr. Wesley have done this?

How did the Protestant Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church respond to the challenge of a new nation?

Why has the twentieth century allowed for a new look at church union?

What are the opportunities at present?

SECTION 2: THEOLOGICAL CONVERGENCE AND CONTINUING ISSUES

Contents of This Section:

- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Theological Convergence
- 2.3 Baptismal Theology
- 2.4 Eucharistic Theology
- 2.5 Bishops
- 2.6 Human Sexuality
- 2.7 Questions for Reflection and Discussion

2.1 Introduction

Apart from the common origins of our churches in the early American period, United Methodists and Episcopalians also share a significant degree of theological convergence. This section will attempt to summarize that theological convergence, and will also identify four issues the dialogue team has identified as being of particular importance: theology of baptism, understanding of the Eucharist, bishops, and the issue of human sexuality.

2.2 Theological Convergence

Both of our churches have a strong foundation of shared faith and practice upon which to build. This theological convergence has been expressed in a wide range of formulations. as noted above, the Episcopal Church summarized the basis of theological agreement for ecumenical relations in the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, which was proposed by the 1886 General Convention of the Episcopal Church and outlined the foundation on which Episcopalians sought unity with other Christians. These foundational elements are: the Old and New Testament as containing all things necessary for salvation, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds as sufficient summaries of the Christian faith, use of the two gospel sacraments, and locally adapted Historic Episcopate. The United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church have both been members of the Consultation on Church Union (now Churches Uniting in Christ) for over forty years. Both churches have been active in the Faith and Order Commission of the World Council of Churches, which produced the very important theological convergence statement *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry* in 1982. In addition, both churches were represented in the international theological dialogue which produced the 1996 statement *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion*, received by the 1998 Lambeth Conference and commended to the World Methodist Council and the Anglican Communion for further study.

Likewise, significant theological discussions between our sister churches in the United Kingdom have declared that no substantial theological differences exist between Anglicans and Methodists, through declarations of the Church of England General Synod as well as through the Anglican-Methodist Covenant, signed by the Church of England and the British Methodist Church in 2002. Further, Episcopal-United Methodist dialogue has been greatly assisted by two important United Methodist documents: *By Water and the Spirit*, about Holy Baptism, adopted by the 2000 General Conference; and *This Holy Mystery*, about Holy Communion or the Eucharist, adopted by the 2004 General Conference.

A Shared Faith

Both United Methodists and Episcopalians

- proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- claim scripture as “containing all things necessary for salvation,” and as the primary rule for the life of the church;
- affirm and use the Nicene and Apostles’ Creeds as sufficient summaries of the Christian faith;
- understand the sacrament of holy baptism as a means of divine grace that initiates one into the life of Christ in the Church;
- understand the sacrament of the Eucharist as a means of divine grace that sustains and deepens our faith;
- continue to worship in ways that reflect our common liturgical and sacramental roots.

John Wesley’s *Sunday Service*, which he sent to the Methodist societies in 1784, was largely based on the 1662 Book of Common Prayer of the Church of England. In the twentieth century, both Episcopalians and Methodists have been influenced by the broader liturgical movement. An emphasis on baptismal ecclesiology, a restoration of the Holy Eucharist as the principle act of Christian worship, and rediscovery of ancient texts in part led to the revision of the Episcopal Church’s Book of Common Prayer, authorized in 1979. The United Methodist Church is undergoing similar influences, evidenced in the general orders of worship contained in the 1989 United Methodist Hymnal and in the documents *By Water and the Spirit* and *This Holy Mystery* adopted by General Conferences.

A Lived Faith

Both churches affirm:

- the gifts and ministries of all persons, laity and clergy, women and men;

- the need for prayer and holiness of heart and life as ways of growth in the Christian faith;
- the pursuit of social action and justice as inherent practices of Christian discipleship;
- the unity of the church as the will of Christ for the sake of mission, service and evangelism;
- the role of bishops as leaders of the life of the church, and as guiding and maintaining the apostolic faith and work.

In brief, the Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church receive and celebrate the ancient Christian gospel as it has been transmitted to us through the sacred scriptures, the ancient Christian creeds, and the historic liturgies of Christian churches. Our churches seek to live out this ancient faith in today's world as we sing and pray and work by divine grace for God's kingdom. We may have developed slightly different liturgical and hymnic accents over the years, but we “love to tell the story of Jesus and his love” (hymn by Katherine Hankey from *The United Methodist Hymnal*, number 156).

2.3 Holy Baptism

- Both of our churches affirm baptism as a sacrament and have affirmed the definition of sacraments used by the broader Christian church as “outward and visible signs of inward and spiritual grace”;
- our churches affirm together that all ministries of the church, lay and ordained, are grounded in baptism.
- our churches affirm that baptism is a grace and gift received by faith;
- we affirm that baptism and the covenantal relationship established through it is the doorway to the life of holiness;
- both of our churches baptize infants as well as adults
- we affirm that holy baptism initiates women and men into the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic church. Thus, in baptism we are already united in Christ.
- An area of non-convergence is that the United Methodist Church has informally developed in some places “open communion” that on certain occasions allows communion of unbaptized persons.

2.4 Holy Eucharist

- Both churches affirm a complete pattern of worship involving word and table;
- Both churches urge regular participation in and celebration of the Eucharist;
- Both churches affirm that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, with a variety of emphases on the manner of Christ's presence;
- Both churches understand that faithful participation in the Eucharist nurtures and sustains the life of the community and of the individual baptized person;
- The United Methodist Church has informally developed a practice of “open communion” that in some cases allows communion of unbaptized persons;
- An area of non-convergence is that The Episcopal Church uses traditional wine, whereas United Methodist Church congregations traditionally use unfermented communion wine in the Eucharist.

2.5 Bishops

The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church both retain an episcopal ordering of the church. While the New Testament does not lay down any one particular form of church organization, from the earliest period the ordering of the ministry of the church has been in the pattern of deacons, elders/priests, and bishops. The two churches have affirmed the relationship between episcopacy and apostolic succession as described in the seminal ecumenical document *Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*:

The primary manifestation of apostolic succession is to be found in the apostolic tradition of the Church as a whole...The orderly transmission of the ordained ministry is therefore a powerful expression of the continuity of the Church throughout history; it also underlines the calling of the ordained minister as guardian of the faith...Under the particular historical circumstances of the growing Church in the early centuries, the succession of bishops became one of the ways, together with the transmission of the Gospel and the life of the community, in which the apostolic tradition of the Church was expressed. This succession was understood as serving, symbolizing and guarding the continuity of the apostolic faith and communion [*Baptism, Eucharist, and Ministry*, ¶¶ 35, 36].

Along with this agreement on the relationship between the episcopacy and the apostolic succession, the two churches have developed their own understandings of the role and function of bishops.

2.5.a The Episcopal Church

The Episcopal Church has inherited a succession of bishops from the Church of England dating back to the consecration of the first Archbishop of Canterbury in 597 and to the apostolic period. One of the fundamental roles of the bishop is to guard the apostolic faith and mission of Christ's church. Bishops are elected by individual dioceses, and these elections in turn must be confirmed by a majority vote of active bishops exercising jurisdiction and by a majority vote of the Standing Committees (bodies of clergy and laity which provide advice and consent to the bishops).

The Episcopal Church outlined its understanding of the need for agreement on the historic episcopate in relationships with other churches as part of the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral (proposed by the House of Bishops of the Episcopal Church, 1886, and subsequently affirmed by the Lambeth Conference of Bishops):

The Historic Episcopate locally adapted in the methods of its administration to the varying needs of the nations and peoples called of God into the unity of His Church [Book of Common Prayer, 877, 878].

2.5.b The United Methodist Church

The ordained ministry of The United Methodist Church derives from the ordinations by John Wesley of superintendents for the Methodist societies. The United Methodist Church historically understood bishops to be elders consecrated to a lifelong ministry of oversight. However, by its formal approval of *The COCU Consensus* in 1988, The United Methodist Church signaled its willingness to understand the episcopacy as a third order of ministry while retaining it as an office, and indicated its desire to incorporate historic episcopal succession as a visible sign of apostolic continuity. United Methodist Bishops are elected at jurisdictional conferences and assigned to geographic areas of oversight. They normally serve no more than three four-year terms in an episcopal area. Episcopacy itself is so foundational for The United Methodist Church that it has included its definition of the episcopacy in a restrictive rule in its constitution:

The General Conference shall not change or alter any part or rule of our government so as to do away with episcopacy or destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency.

2.5.c The Road to Full Communion

As noted in other sections of this study guide, in the early 1780s Anglicans in the former colonies were in a difficult situation. The Church of England was legally unable to ordain persons for either the Methodist societies or for the Anglicans who remained in the new American republic. Consequently several groups were forced to take matters into their own hands and find ways to provide for pastoral care and missional work. In March of 1783 eleven clergymen in the state of Connecticut met to elect Samuel Seabury as bishop. Seabury was consecrated by bishops of the Scottish

Episcopal Church in 1784. Concurrently, John Wesley was concerned about the future of the Methodist societies. In 1784 he ordained Thomas Coke as a “superintendent” for the Methodist societies. At the organizing conference of American Methodists in December of 1784, Francis Asbury and Thomas Coke were elected superintendents and Asbury consecrated, employing the Book of Common Prayer’s ordinal, as adopted by Wesley. Soon, thereafter, Methodists adopted the term “bishop,” and after Wesley’s ordination have sustained a regular succession of consecration. Wesley’s actions should be seen in their context, as an emergency measure given the fact that the Church of England was unable to provide ordination for leaders of the Methodist societies. It must also be noted that although adopting an episcopal method of governance, the historic succession was broken among Methodists.

The manner of the reconciliation of the two episcopacies is still a matter of discussion and study. As part of this discussion, it is our hope that with regards to a future reconciliation of episcopal ministries, Episcopalians and United Methodists affirm the following:

- Our journey toward full communion will include a way to recognize and reconcile the two episcopacies in such a manner as not to call into question the authenticity of each other's ordinations.
- Both churches affirm the historic episcopate, in the language of the *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* statement, as a “sign, but not a guarantee, of the catholicity, unity, and continuity of the church.”
- Both churches agree that the historic episcopate is always in a process of reform in the service of the Gospel.
- From their formative periods in the colonial age both churches locally adapted the historic episcopate for the sake of mission.

2.6 Human Sexuality

In their official statements, both churches affirm the sanctity of marriage and the family, as well as chastity in singleness. Both churches affirm that all persons have dignity and sacred worth, and therefore are deserving of the acceptance and pastoral care of the church as well as common human rights and civil liberties. Nonetheless, issues of sexuality have become increasingly complex in the current period in both of our churches.

We trust the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead us in these areas. We agree that we do not find this to be an impediment towards full communion. While there may be differences within and between our denominations, standards and qualifications for ordination are matters of internal polity of each church. Exchange of clergy in any possible full communion agreement is always by invitation, and we envision that in any future agreement

for full communion, each church will continue to order its ministry as it sees fit.

2.7 Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. In what ways can you perceive both the Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church as proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ? Are we in agreement on the most central Christian teachings?
2. How do differences in teachings and practices related to baptism affect the life of church members in our denominations? What do we believe that God does in baptism, and how is this reflected in our practices of baptism?
3. What would a Methodist attending an Episcopal service of Holy Communion find to be different about the service and about the manner in which it is celebrated? What would an Episcopalian find to be different about a United Methodist service of Holy Communion? In what ways do you discern or understand the presence of Christ in the sacrament? How significant are these differences in practices or beliefs for our churches to have “full communion” with each other?
4. How is episcopal succession (the unbroken succession of bishops in the church) a sign of continuity with the apostolic church? Why is this a critical issue for United Methodists and Episcopalians?
5. Why might issues related to human sexuality be seen as an impediment to communion between our churches today?

SECTION 3: UNDERSTANDING THE CHARACTER AND ETHOS OF OUR CHURCHES

Contents of This Section:

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Questions for Reflection and Discussion

3.1 Introduction

The Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church have each formed a unique and distinctive spirit, a way of being “church.” Our individual denominations exhibit a particular “tone,” an underlying sentiment of thought and practice that is often recognizable by the members of each communion. This combination of ideas, customs, interests, and skills is called its “ethos”—that is, its own particular church “culture.” Our common ancestry, our denominational history in the United States, the differing congregational ambiance found in different regions of the country, and the reception of ecumenical work in this century have produced distinctive church cultures.

The Ethos of the Episcopal Church

Scripture, tradition, and reason are the words that most come to mind when thinking of the ethos of the Episcopal Church. The way in which these overlap and are dependent on each other very much defines the Church. The traditions of the Episcopal Church are highlighted by the following:

- **Liturgical** - Episcopalians find a comfort in the discipline that defines their worship. Even though there are numerous service styles, the constancy and richness of expression of services as outlined in the Book of Common Prayer is enhanced by the attention to details such as of music and setting.
- **Sacramental** – Historic roots in the undivided, catholic church center Episcopalians with a strong grounding in the sacraments, particularly Baptism and Eucharist.
- **Comprehensive** – Episcopalians take pride in their doctrinal diversity which encourages a scholarly approach to the search for continued understanding of a received faith.
- **Corporate** – Episcopalians have a strong sense that the Church is grounded in the gathered worshipping community of the baptized. Even though the structure is hierarchical and clergy have a defined

authority, there is a trust in the church as community for prayer and mission.

- **Pastoral** – Pastoral sensitivity is central to Episcopalians and essential in understanding social justice work as responding to human needs in the mission of the Church.

The Ethos of The United Methodist Church

There are a few characteristics that have consistently marked the Methodist movement and Methodist churches through their history. Some of these characteristic marks of Methodist ethos are as follows.

- **Missional** – Methodists originated not as a church but as a religious movement focused on the preaching of repentance, faith, and holiness. Methodist understandings of mission have evolved, as we shall see in section 4, but mission remains at the heart of The United Methodist Church, which defines its own mission in these words: “to make disciples of Jesus Christ” (see relevant sections of the United Methodist Book of Discipline).
- **“Heart Religion”** – Methodists insisted that repentance, faith, and holiness are not simply matters of assent to facts but engage the “affections” as well: repentance implies the heart-felt acknowledgment of one’s dependency on God; faith implies heart-felt trust in Christ; holiness implies the transformation of our desires. Methodist hymns, sermons, and personal testimonies inculcated a “religion of the heart.”
- **Discipline and Transformation** – Methodists practiced careful discipline in small groups from their origins and renewal in the Methodist tradition has almost always involved the renewal of an understanding of discipleship as covenantal accountability to each other. Methodists found this use of accountable discipline to be a powerful means to personal and social transformation.
- **Service** – Methodists emerged in the contexts of the industrial revolution in the British Isles and the expanding frontier in North America, and in these and other settings they have sought to be in service to persons caught in situations of poverty, slavery, social displacement, and dependency.
- **Connectional** – The United Methodist Church is a globally connected denomination with strong centralized structures by which it carries out its mission. One historic sign of the connectional nature of the United Methodist Church is that local congregations cannot secede and take their property with them.

3.2 Questions for Reflection and Discussion

1. Do you think it possible for a denomination to reflect only one ethos? If so, how do the various ethnic and interest groups contribute to the culture that reflects the denomination as a whole? If no, how does your church deal with the underlying tensions of diverse church cultures?
2. What does the regionalism of each church contribute to the larger perspective of the thought and action of the national organization? country?
3. Can you think of some jokes that your church tells on itself? Do you recognize your church ethos in these jokes or in the ones given in the text above? What “zings” home in the punch lines? What is left-out in the caricature?

SECTION 4

CALLING – MISSION – COMMUNION – GIFTS

Contents of this Section:

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Common Calling: Baptism and Covenant
- 4.3 Common Mission
- 4.5 Full Communion
- 4.6 Gifts of our Churches for Each Other
- 4.7 Questions for Reflection and Discussion

4.1 Introduction

We believe that God is the one who calls Christians into unity with one another for the sake of mission and witness in the world. This is the essence of Jesus' prayer in the Gospel of John, where mission and unity are linked:

I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me [John 17:20-23].

Episcopalians and United Methodists affirm that God is calling our two churches into relationship for the sake of mission and witness. Our divisions are a scandal, and our drawing closer together will allow for a stronger witness. We engage more fully in mission when we are in full communion. Further, full communion consists of the free sharing of our gifts.

4.2 Common Calling

Although we recognize that over the past three centuries the Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church have grown apart. Differences in history, structure, and ethos have developed, nonetheless we also affirm a “strong foundation of shared faith” (*Sharing in the Apostolic Communion*, p. 8) on which to build, evidenced as well in other sections of this study guide.

The world of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries has opened our minds to see ways God may be calling us into full communion. These ways include: the Ecumenical Movement, new understandings of the Bible and Christian origins, the study of *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry* by the

World Council of Churches in 1982, the need for evangelism in an increasingly secular world, and the need for commitment to causes for justice and peace (*Sharing in the Apostolic Communion*, p.17-18). But our calling to be together and to share full communion is grounded in our common baptism and in the covenant with God into which we enter in baptism.

The center point of our calling to full communion is our baptism. We affirm together that baptism is the act appointed by Christ by which we are initiated into the Christian community, and our calling as Christians is grounded in our common baptism. Episcopalians and Methodists mutually recognize one another's baptisms.

Both of our churches understand baptism to involve a covenant or sacred agreement between God, the Christian community, and the person who is initiated into the community through this sacrament. Both The United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church have liturgies identified as the "baptismal covenant" that include the renunciation of evil and the affirmation of historic Christian faith on the part of candidates or their sponsors, prayers for the candidates, and the blessing of the baptismal water by reciting the biblical narrative of God's saving acts associated with water. The document *By Water and the Spirit*, adopted by the 2000 General Conference of The United Methodist Church, describes the covenant entered into in baptism in the following way:

In The United Methodist Church's ritual for baptism the Church declares that it is bound in covenant to God to God; through baptism new persons are initiated into that covenant. The covenant connects God, the community of faith, and the person being baptized; all three are essential to the fulfillment of the baptismal covenant [*By Water and the Spirit*, p. 8].

Two key passages about the covenant in the Bible are in Exodus 19:1-6 and in I Peter 2:9-10. The first tells of the covenant between God and God's people recorded by Moses which was to be lived out by obedience to the Ten Commandments found in Exodus 20:1-17. The second passage speaks of a new covenant in baptism. This letter is thought by many scholars to have been a sermon to the newly baptized in the early Christian church. It tells what God expects of those who are newly baptized.

4.3 Common Mission

How do we as United Methodists and Episcopalians understand "mission" in our churches today? What is the common mission to which our churches are being called by the Spirit today? Some biblical insights may help illuminate the concept of mission.

- *Mission* is God's mission.
- God creates, makes whole, works for peace and justice and righteousness, loves.

- God is working towards God's kingdom to come, God's will to be done, on earth as in heaven.

One of the most relevant definitions of "mission" is *the actions our two churches have taken to bring about the spread of God's reign here on earth, to make disciples for the transformation of the world*. Our two churches have common historic roots as well as differences in carrying out this mission.

The United Methodist Church and the Episcopal Church have a long history of involvement in mission, rooted in the work of the Church of England's Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) founded in 1698 and its sister organization, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG), begun in 1701. SPCK was concerned to educate the people in the American colonies and provided Bibles, Books of Common Prayer, and catechisms. It has been estimated that the SPCK sent over one million copies of printed materials to the colonies prior to the American revolution. In addition, the SPG sent missionaries to these colonies. In 1735 John and Charles Wesley traveled to the colony in Georgia as SPG missionaries. These two societies were instrumental in helping to plant our common Anglicanism ancestors in the American colonies, particularly in New England.

The following chart is an attempt to lay out some of the historic divergences and convergences of Episcopalians and United Methodists with regards to mission.

	United Methodist Church	Episcopal Church
Early Eighteenth Century	Mission organized to/for: * on the frontier * to Native Americans and blacks * to individuals * influenced by Great Awakening	* Mission in colonies through SPG * Mission to Native Americans and blacks * Not as influenced by Great Awakening
Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries	* mission becomes salvation: * centrality of revivalism * church organized for mission: circuit riders * beginnings of global mission	* beginning of early emphasis on mission * 1821 mission society formed: Domestic and Foreign Mission Society * Beginnings of global mission

	United Methodist Church	Episcopal Church
Mid-to Late Nineteenth Century	* mission includes education: * Sunday schools * Literacy movement * mission involves social action * Temperance movement * global mission increases, as does work with Native Americans and blacks	* Continuation of global mission work * Involvement in labor movement * Established seminaries and private schools * Domestically spread to the West and continued work among Native Americans.
Nineteenth to Twentieth Centuries	* mission shifts from frontier to primarily global mission field * continues mission to broader society: * Temperance work continues * Adoption of Social Principles; includes ecumenism: Federal Council of Churches, National Council of Churches, World Council of Churches	* mission shifts to global mission * also ecumenical: Federal Council of Churches, National Council of Churches, World Council of Churches,
Twentieth Century Convergences	* Christian mission shaped by fundamentalism against liberalism * Christian mission shaped by movement of the Holy Spirit * “Body of Christ” becomes a guiding principle of congregational life * Ecumenical recovery of the ministry of all God’s people * Ecumenical recovery of the diaconate, the servant hood Ministry * Ecumenical/ Interfaith realities in today’s multicultural/ethnic world * Community oriented churches – work with inner city churches	

Ways to express the meaning of mission:

Both of our churches' governing documents try to define the mission of the Church in carrying out God's mission.

The mission of the Church is "to make disciples of Jesus Christ" [see relevant sections of United Methodist Book of Discipline).

The mission of the Church is to restore all people to unity with God and each other in Christ [Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church, p. 855].

The Episcopal understanding of mission has changed from the late eighteenth century to the twenty-first century.

In 1988 the Lambeth Conference of Bishops, a once in a decade gathering of all Anglican bishops, offered the following definition:

The mission of the Church includes: Proclaiming the Gospel and enabling response; teaching, baptizing and nurturing new believers; response to human need by loving service; challenging and transforming unjust structures of society [cited from *Sharing in the Apostolic Communion*, ¶ 36].

In the twenty-first century, mission is both to a world that is hungry for Christ and to a post-Christian world.

4.5 Full Communion

The goal of dialogue between our churches is "full communion." This does not simply mean unity in the sacrament of Holy Communion, although our unity in the Eucharist is perhaps the most important sign of our communion or fellowship together as Christians. "Communion" involves sharing, fellowship, and unity together in our calling and mission. As defined in the introduction to this study, the sense of full communion we envision involves "a relationship between two distinct churches or communions in which each maintains its own autonomy while recognizing the catholicity and apostolicity of the other, and believing the other to hold the essentials of the Christian faith."

As we heard in Jesus' prayer in John 17, unity and mission are closely linked. In fact, this is so important here we repeat Jesus' words to his disciples:

I ask not only on behalf of these [i.e., the eleven disciples that were still with him], but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word [that includes us Christians in the twenty-first century] that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me (John 17:20-21).

The word the Greek New Testament uses for "communion" is most often *koinonia*, which can also be translated as "fellowship." It denotes that

which is held “in common” (*koinos*) between persons and groups. It is a term with rich meaning in the New Testament and rich with implications for the unity we seek together.

Koinonia is used to speak of communion with God, as in 2 Corinthians 13:13.

Koinonia also refers to sharing in the very life of God, as in 1 John 1:3.

Koinonia indicates partaking of the divine nature, as in 2 Peter 1:4.²

In full communion with one another, we are carrying out Christ’s work of reconciliation in the world together and witnessing together to the Kingdom to come.

In full communion we are being more intentional about allowing the Holy Spirit to lead us to God’s calling to be one.

4.6 Gifts of Our Churches for Each Other

We have all been blessed with gifts from God, as Paul describes in 1 Corinthians 12 and 14. While our divisions are a scandal (1 Corinthians 1:10-13), we also believe that both of our churches, the Episcopal Church and The United Methodist Church, have been given gifts that have made possible living out our call to God’s mission.

As stated in the introduction to this study guide, full communion does not have to mean organic merger or union, and in the communion we envision, neither of our churches seeks to remake the other. We seek to be open to the gifts of one another and to work more closely in mission and witness in the world.

One of the fears expressed by participants in our bilateral dialogue is that we could come to a formal agreement for sharing sacraments and clergy between our churches and yet still not experience the fullness of each other’s gifts. We would regard this as a tragedy, “having the form but lacking the power” of full communion. We seek a fullness of communion that would empower substantial sharing of gifts between our churches at all levels of church life, especially among local Episcopal and United Methodist congregations.

The bilateral dialogue challenges our churches to reflect on the gifts that we bring to each other. The following lists of gifts we bring to each other were compiled from conversations between United Methodist and Episcopal bishops. Consider these lists of gifts, and then in the questions for reflection and discussion at the end of this section we will invite you to develop your own lists of gifts we can share with each other.

²Taken from *A Church Shaped for Mission*, study group material based on An Anglican-Methodist Covenant, p. 10.

Gifts The United Methodist Church Can Offer to the Episcopal Church (a list compiled by Episcopal and United Methodist bishops meeting in “mixed quartets”):

- Commitment to mission and evangelism
- Passion for preaching
- Strong tradition of hymnody
- Historic involvement in social justice
- Wesleyan notion of conferencing
- Emphasis on holiness of heart and life; personal and communal holiness
- Emphasis on religious experience
- Remnants of class meeting still among UMC, small group life
- Commitment to educations through institutions and educational materials

Gifts the Episcopal Church can offer to The United Methodist Church (a list compiled by the Episcopal and United Methodist bishops meeting in “mixed quartets”):

- Centrality of the Book of Common Prayer
- Liturgy articulates theology
- Consistent celebration of Eucharistic liturgy and daily prayer
- The Historic Episcopate
- Understanding of clergy standing in the place of the bishop
- Bishops as sacramental and pastoral leaders
- Historic episcopate as a sign of the apostolicity of the Church
- Power of liturgy for continued liturgical and congregational renewal
- Bishop’s place in discernment and ordination process
- Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral
- Emphasis on a healing ministry, including Order of St. Luke and liturgical healing

4.7 Questions for Reflection and Discussion

On Our Common Calling:

In order better to understand our common call to mission in baptism, we suggest the following:

- A. Read the material concerning the services of the Baptismal Covenant in *The United Methodist Hymnal*, pp. 32-39. (There are other forms of this service on pp. 39-49 which you might want to look at also.)
- B. Read the service of Holy Baptism in the Book of Common Prayer of the Episcopal Church, pp. 299-314.
- C. Some questions to ask:

What words in each of these services express ways in which we are called to deeper witness in Christ?

What are the similarities between our two services? The differences?

As a reflection on the place of covenant relationship and our common call, we suggested the following:

A. Read Exodus 19:1-6 and I Peter 2:9-10. Compare the two covenant passages looking for answers to these questions:

What did God promise to God's people?

What does God ask of the people who are making covenant with God?

How do the people know God will keep the Covenant?

B. After discussing these questions, then spend time on the following one:

How do the United Methodist and the Episcopal rituals of Baptism act out the making of a covenant between God and God's people today?

C. Each church believes we have been called to mission. As a conclusion to this section, please spend some time on the following questions:

Do we, the members, believe that our Baptism calls us to mission?

How do we live out this mission?

On Our Common Mission:

What other words besides "mission" can we use to describe God's work?

What stories do we find in the Bible which tell us how God works?

How did Jesus carry out his mission and show us the way to do God's work?

Study a day in the life of Jesus: Mark 1:14-39.

Make a list of all the ways Jesus showed us the way to be and do God's work.

Ask: How do Jesus' actions show us how to be and do God's work today?

Choose a couple of examples from Mark to apply to our call in today's world, such as:

Mark 1:14, “proclaiming the good news of God”

Mark 1:16-17, calling the disciples;

Mark 1:21-28, healing the man with an unclean spirit;

Mark 1:29-31, healing Peter’s mother-in-law so she could serve them.

How do the definitions of mission given by our churches (see above) compare with Jesus’ actions in the Gospels?

On Full Communion:

For reflection: Look up the word *koinonia* in a New Testament Greek lectionary, one which lists the places where the word appears in the Scriptures.

What do these references tell us about the place of *koinonia* in the life of the Church?

What do these references tell us about the place of *koinonia* in God’s mission?

What is the connection between *koinonia* and “the Holy Communion” of bread and wine?

What other understandings do we have of full communion?

On the Gifts of Our Churches for Each Other:

What gifts do you think the United Methodist Church would bring to a relationship of full communion with the Episcopal Church?

What gifts do you think the Episcopal Church would bring to a relationship of full communion with the United Methodist Church?

After this discussion, compare your list to the lists given above by United Methodist and Episcopal bishops reflecting on the same questions.

How would your own list differ from theirs? What additional gifts did you note?

How might our two churches begin to share these gifts? How would full communion, including interchangeability of clergy, strengthen these gifts? What would it mean for your congregation?